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**REGULAR MEETING  
November 21, 2016**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on November 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Hemmann, Hurley, Latina, Martino, Rell, Spinella, Deputy Mayor Barry and Mayor Montinieri.

Absent: Councilor Bello.

Also Present: Kathy Bagley, Director, Parks & Recreation; Erica Texeira, Assistant Director of Social & Youth Services; Sally Katz, Director of Physical Services; Judy Keane of the Keane Foundation; John Zinzarella, Chief Financial Officer and Chris Stone, Assistant Counsel of the MDC; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk.

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Councilor Latina.

Judy Keane, town resident and President of the Richard M. Keane Foundation stated that they work very hard all year long to provide programs for the community. This year's Carnival was very successful in great part by board members and three beautiful days. Mark Trahan, Chairman of the Carnival, joined Mrs. Keane at the podium and presented a \$19,000 check to Mayor Montinieri, Director Kathy Bagley and Assistant Director Erica Texeira. Board members Barbara Bellas, Mia Caulfield, Howard Greenblatt and Darcy O'Connor were invited up to take a picture.

**MDC Presentation – Surcharge**

John Zinzarella, Chief Financial Officer of the MDC stated that the current necessity for planning for the situation was brought about by the City of Hartford's financial distress. City officials under the Bronin Administration believe that the best solutions for its financial distress will be the actions that can only be taken by the state. The legislature convenes in January. In the fiscal 17 which ends June 30<sup>th</sup> Hartford has budgeted and has stated that it intends to pay the January and April, 2017 payments due the MDC. Hartford's budget for the next fiscal year is starting July 1, 2017 going through June 30, 2018 is not yet prepared. They [Hartford] cannot make the commitment at this point due to their financial condition. The MDC is on a fiscal calendar year which is January 1 through December 31, 2017 so we are here at our budget adoption process. We are the first out of the gate so we have to develop a plan that addresses the potential consequences of Hartford's financial distress which could include missing payments in Hartford's fiscal 2018 which would be the July and October 2017 payments due from the City of Hartford. Based upon the current MDC charter, the MDC does not have the ability to enact a supplemental budget after December 31<sup>st</sup> other than for unforeseen expenses that would need revenues. But it does not allow the MDC to adopt a supplemental budget for gaps in revenue. If the City of Hartford misses a payment, that would be a gap in revenue as opposed to an actual increased expense item. The MDC cannot borrow for working capital currently under its charter. Its charter enables the borrowing powers for the MDC solely for capital purposes. The ability to issue a tax in anticipation of a levy, tax revenue for a period no longer than six months, that is the only other opportunity that the MDC has to borrow anything other than for capital purposes. The MDC must offer its sewer operations largely from and separate from its water utility operations. The MDC's general fund is its sewer

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operations. There is a separate proprietary enterprise fund for the water utility so the revenues are separate and distinct as well as the expenses. The MDC currently has a 113 and a half million dollars' worth of bond anticipation notes which are maturing on December 1, 2016. The MDC plans to pay for these notes through the issuance of its 173 and a half million dollar geo bond sale which was contemplated for November of 2016. The financial community in addition to the rating agencies as well as the folks on Wall Street and the bond buyers are looking for the MDC to address any potential Hartford default in the payment. The uncertainty already over the Hartford situation has cost the MDC a down grade in its ratings that was applied for this geo bond issue. The bond market has been rather unsettled since the unexpected results of the election and has been very volatile and a lot of the potential buyers are being very selective in what they buy. This has resulted in the forecasted borrowing costs to be much more costly than was originally anticipated. Getting to the 2017 budget, the MDC intends to pass a budget and issue a tax warrant that allows the MDC annual tax at a level that will provide sufficient revenues to operate the MDC's sewer operations in the event that Hartford misses its payments. This would require the other seven member towns to pay slightly higher tax to compensate for Hartford's inability to pay if that comes. The reserve that was originally contemplated was much larger. The reserve that is being proposed for the 2017 budget for consideration now only is putting in reserve for the fiscal 2018 payments for the City of Hartford which is the July and October 2017 payments. If the City of Hartford pays then the additional sums collected will be refunded back to the member towns. Through this process the MDC has incorporated suggestions that have been made by the other member towns through numerous meetings that were held during the budgetary process starting in September and the latest was this past Thursday. During this period, the MDC did consider other suggestions and after reviewing them we determined that they were probably not feasible. They were asked to consider passing a supplemental budget which they could not do because there is no unforeseen expense associated with this item. The issuance of tax anticipation notes cannot be issued for a period not to exceed six months based upon our charter and has to be supported by levy tax revenue to come. If there is no reserve in the plan, those tax anticipation notes would not be marketable. The member towns also suggested guaranteeing the TANS (tax anticipation notes) if we issued them in absence of a City of Hartford payment or if there was no reserve. This would require the member towns to make an appropriation for the amount in their budgets anyway so it would achieve the same result as the reserve. They also review if the towns would issue an agreement of memorandum to make the deficient payment in the event that Hartford defaults but this can only be feasible if it's issued in the tax warrants which achieves the same outcome as a reserve and credit model. Specifically to Wethersfield the overall general Ad Valorem increase was 7%. The 2016's adopted Ad Valorem was 38.9 million and the proposed base Ad Valorem 41.7 million. The Ad Valorem is allocated to the member towns based upon the formula contained in the charter which is the proportionate share of the sum of the part of three year cash receipts. This year the 2017 percentage for Wethersfield dropped from prior years of 8.24% down to 8.18% so the base Ad Valorem increase for Wethersfield is 6.25%. The 2017 budget also contemplates the reserve equivalent to the two payments from the City of Hartford which would be July and October of 2017. The two payments total \$2,937,875, just a hair under 6 million dollars. The formula for determining the reserve is you take those two payments and divide them by one minus the City of Hartford's share; the current share is 26.31%. So you gross that payment up so that little under 6 million dollars becomes a reserve of 7.97 million dollars of which is then assessed to all eight member towns based upon the Ad Valorem. The portion assessed for the seven member towns is \$5,875,750 of which Wethersfield is assessed \$652,241 bringing the grand total of the 2017 base Ad Valorem in two payment reserves to \$4,060,441. The MDC's Ad Valorem payments are quarterly payments due Jan 18, April 19, July 19 and October 18 (2017). They are proposing that the reserve payment be paid on

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October 25, 2017 so Hartford has committed that they will pay its first two payments of a little over 5.1 million dollars so the net amount the MDC would collect the 5.9 million dollars. In the event that Hartford makes its July there would be an automatic credit or no payment due in October.

Councilor Latina questioned what the total of the assessment plus the Ad Valorem would Wethersfield owe.

John Zinzarella stated for MDC's fiscal 2017 Wethersfield would be \$4,060,441.

Councilor Latina inquired that say Hartford doesn't pay the last two and you have to use the reserve then you are saying that we would be reimbursed down the road when ~~you~~ [Hartford] would pay.

John Zinzarella stated that when they would pay or if the state legislature comes up with a fix or if the MDC's charter could be amended and we could finance this shortfall over a period of time. If everything worked well the MDC would never have to collect the reserve payments from any of the member towns.

Councilor Latina asked if we could wait to pay the reserve until all of those things happen.

John Zinzarella replied that is why the reserve is scheduled for October of 2017 so it gives us some time for the legislative session to start and take action from January up until that point.

Councilor Latina responded that we would have to budget for that in our budget this year.

John Zinzarella replied that each of the member town's charter is a little different but his understanding is that Wethersfield would have to budget it in their fiscal 2018 budget.

Councilor Latina asked what if we chose not to pay it or participate.

Chris Stone, Assistant Counsel for the MDC stated that they had certain options available to them under their Charter to collect either unpaid Ad Valorem payments or insufficiently paid Ad Valorem payments. In fact they plan on using some of those collections mechanisms if Hartford doesn't pay. For example, they have the right to tax the inhabitants of the city or town that doesn't pay either jointly or separately; we can seek payment by execution against one or more businesses. We hope it never gets to that point but it is available to us and also these would be tax warrants so we could also apply for an execution against the assets of a town. These methods are harsh and difficult on a payer (town) but they take time which we don't have. We have operating expenses that we have to pay and waiting a year or two for legal proceedings to resolve themselves on these collection efforts is not a viable option. We would hope that Hartford will make those payments but we have to plan almost worst case scenario.

Councilor Latina asked if the MDC charter mentions a reserve and she understands the tax implication but is the reserve even in there.

Chris Stone stated that the word isn't used but what it does say is that they have to plan their Ad Valorem budget to make sure that they can meet all the expenses on the sewer side of their business. If there is any indication that one or more of our member towns are unable to pay then we have to find

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some other revenue source to meet our operating expenses.

Councilor Latina asked if this was going to be a onetime fix or what if that is going to be the continuum over the next several years.

Chris Stone commented that she has hit on really what is the long term problem here and he doesn't know what the answer is. They have talked about increasing the pilot payments from that state to the city for their exempt property, other revenues sources for the city, increasing the sales tax and he doesn't know the answer is but it is a potentially long term that requires fundamental changes in the way that cities raises revenue. But you did hit on it; it could go beyond their fiscal 2017.

Councilor Latina asked what the MDC was doing to cut their costs to offset some of the reserve they are asking from everyone else.

Chris Stone replied that they have gone from over 700 employees in the past five years down to 510 and plan to go down to 485 and they are doing more with less and relying heavily on technology and some modest incentives.

John Zinzarella explained all things the MDC has and is doing to cut costs.

Councilor Hurley asked what the MDC fund balance was right now.

John Zinzarella replied the general fund unrestricted fund balance is 14.5 million dollars.

Councilor Hurley stated that he was a believer that Wethersfield taxpayers paying Hartford's MDC bill is bailing out Hartford and paying for their failed policies and probably paying for a new baseball stadium. They are going to pay those bills before they pay their water bill and that doesn't seem right. He is going to fight this and he thinks the MDC should go after Hartford's assets and he hopes our Commissioners will vote against it.

Councilor Latina asked when do they need an answer by and when do the Commissioners meet next to vote.

John Zinzarella responded they were going out for a negotiated GEO bond sale and some of the feedback they received from the underwriters asked us before pricing to actually have the board meeting to consider the 2017 budget so tomorrow at noon the MDC and district board is meeting to discuss and vote on the 2017 budget with the Ad Valorem with the reserve and based upon that then we would move forward with the options of the sale of the GEO bonds.

Councilor Martino asked what was the proposed 2017 budget in total right now.

John Zinzarella replied the water budget is 83.5 million dollars and 76 million for the sewer side.

Councilor Martino asked was the loss from Hartford like 5.1 million if they don't make those two payments.

John Zinzarella responded the sum of those two payments are 2,937,875 so let's call it just a hair under

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6 million dollars for those two payments.

Councilor Martino asked if there was any way the budget being proposed could be adjusted to reduce all of this or part of this.

John Zinzarella stated that they started this process with the towns on September 26 and the number was a lot higher. To get down to this point we took some pretty aggressive budgetary assumptions and between debt service is 73% of our budget and have taken pretty much out all that we can.

Councilor Hurley remarked that since our budget goes a year would that mean we would have to budget 1.4 million because we only get one time to budget.

John Zinzarella replied for the town's fiscal 2018 budget, the way the MDC does the Ad Valorem payments is the January and April payments are no more than 25% each of the prior years adopted so there is never any increase in the January and April's payments. This Ad Valorem reserve and credit model is a twelve month close loop so it doesn't spill over beyond the MDC's twelve month period. We hope there is a legislative fix either for Hartford or some other power that the district might have to not do this again in our fiscal 2018.

Councilor Rell commented that with everything that is going on in Hartford, their focus right now is probably going to be the 1.5 billion dollar deficit facing the State of Connecticut. Hartford has a pretty strong lobby there. The legislators are pushing the majority party to get a fix as soon as possible. Would the MDC want a seat at the table in negotiations to make sure that the MDC is at the top of the list?

John Zinzarella stated that from a legislative standpoint, the MDC would like to partner with the member towns to develop a legislative agenda.

Chris Stone replied that the MDC will be at the table to make sure that their interest in getting paid by Hartford is perfected and that there is some resolution so it doesn't spill over to 2018 and 2019. There has to be a fundamental fix from the State Capitol to assist not only Hartford but for us. There are things that the legislature can do that are not going to cost them any money. We propose three legislative fixes that we want all our member towns to be supportive of that won't cost the taxpayers of the state any more money. We need changes to our Charter that gives us more flexibility to deal with this issue that our current Charter provides. This is the first time this has happened.

Deputy Mayor Barry asked what are the Charter changes they are proposing.

Chris Stone responded to extend our ability or term of our tax anticipation notes from six months to three years; the ability to do midyear corrections to our budget because they have the flexibility on the expense side when we have to spend money on an emergency, but we don't have the flexibility on the revenue side and it would work and give us an additional tool; allowing us to treat our Ad Valorem levy as a tax levy with the same priority as a collection of taxes. Obviously, we are second in line to the United States government and to whatever taxes the State may be owed but give us the priority that a tax levy or lien would have to collect.

Councilor Hemmann asked if they considered changing their fiscal year in their request to the legislature because that is mapped out in the charter to be more in line with the member towns' fiscal years to make

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your planning more in sync with what the other communities are doing. Are you looking at potential revamping of what the Ad Valorem contains and how that is affixed and apportioned within a community. What does it include, could it include more, should it include more so that you are spreading it out so that it is a more equalized type of formula?

Chris Stone responded that they were asked to consider modifying how exempt property was treated for purposes of determining what the Ad Valorem charge would be. What Hartford proposed was that each town should get the credit for their nontaxable exempt property directly and once that town got their credit then they would have their Ad Valorem payment but that was contrary to what their Charter provides. Their Charter provides that they arrive at the whole budget, they subtract from the budget the monies received from non-exempt properties district wide and then the net is divided up according the average three year tax collection apportioned amongst the eight member towns. If they did it the way Hartford suggested then their Ad Valorem would go down and more likely than not those member towns who don't have a high exempt property sewer user fee coming in their Ad Valorem would go up. If it was done the way Hartford was suggesting their Ad Valorem would be two million dollars lower. There was also discussion of adopting a sewer user fee instead of an Ad Valorem charge but the issue with that is that it is going to be a shift of responsibility for the sewer system to homeowners because they are the water users and the sewer user charge would be based upon water consumption. The office buildings or the churches, etc. are not the water consumers and the water consumers are the residences and we have stayed away from abandoning our Ad Valorem charge for that reason. We don't have the infrastructure within the MDC to convert from an Ad Valorem to a sewer user collection system and because our expense is part of a real estate tax bill that whatever is paid by the homeowner is tax deductible so they receive that benefit and the sewer user charge would not be. They did a study in the late 1990s of what it meant to go to from an Ad Valorem system to a sewer user fee for individual rate payers and it had a negative benefit to the homeowners.

John Zinzarella commented the fiscal year offset of the MDC calendar year versus the municipality calendar year that provides the ability for the towns to see what is coming down the pike. We are six months in advance so if we were going at the same time, we would be having these discussions as you are advancing your budget through adoption. It would be difficult to have that dialogue to make sure that both entities have the appropriate budgets. If we were on the same path, same time line, you would be making a lot of assumptions about what we are about to warrant or what our tax levy would be because you won't see it until you adopt and that's the rationale. In addition, it also provides the water seasonal cycle that fits more of a calendar year.

Chris Stone stated that the MDC provides a sanitary service that they cannot cut off. If people do not pay their water bills, we have the authority to shut off their water. We don't have the ability to eliminate or terminate sewer services to business and residences of Hartford. We consider ourselves a health priority and payment of a health expense that deserves the priority and when sitting at that table they will make that clear.

Councilor Hurley commented that he didn't think Hartford will make the right choices because they haven't made a lot of right choices in a lot of years and Wethersfield will be stuck with it.

Councilor Latina questioned how many water companies across the nation have this Ad Valorem tax.

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Chris Stone replied he did know of any. With the Clean Water Act back in the late 70's and early 80's the EPA wanted sewer systems to move away from an Ad Valorem system to a sewer user charge. The MDC was grandfathered in and allowed to keep the Ad Valorem system with some modification of having some form of a sewer user fee for high volume exempt users and users that have a high level of concentration of certain elements of what they discharge into the sanitary sewer systems.

Councilor Latina questioned who would be exempt.

Chris Stone replied when he says exempt he doesn't mean that they are exempt from paying us, but because they are exempt from paying taxes they don't contribute to the Ad Valorem charge. So Churches, Universities, hospitals, state buildings and municipal buildings they capture the cost to provide them sewer services through this sewer user fee.

John Zinzarella stated the Ad Valorem tax is a tax to the member municipalities which is considered an operating expense which is then it's put into the mill rate of each of the individual towns. Hartford Hospital, St. Francis and Trinity College are not paying property taxes to Hartford so what the MDC does is based upon their water consumption on their water bill they will pay for the base water rate, the meter quarterly charge, the special surcharge and a sewer user charge to pay for their piece or their use of the sewer system.

Councilor Rell questioned about the Niagara water bottling plant what was the completion date.

Chris Stone replied by the end of December 2016 or early January.

Councilor Rell asked if they would be paying fees to the MDC and what would the revenue be.

Chris Stone stated that we have the water side and the sewer side. Any revenues they receive from the water side can offset some overall general expenses but they don't use any of the Ad Valorem because that is on the sewer side and they keep those two revenues separate.

John Zinzarella stated about two million dollars in water utility revenue but they would be subject to a high flow sewer user charge and other charges and those funds can only be used for the payment of either capital expenditures associated with projects to meet the consentor or the debt services of funding for those projects.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

David Caruk of 149 Broad Street commented he watched the state meetings online. They didn't tell anybody they are going to ask or demand the towns to fill the bill. He was glad that Councilor Latina asked what would happen if we don't pay. What are they going to do? He heard one of the representatives say that they can't turn off the water, it's a health issue. He guesses they can't turn off our water either if we don't pay the difference. They expect all seven surrounding towns to pay. Is Niagara paying for any of this? He [Zinzarella] said the streams of revenue are different, the water they use and the sewers. Niagara doesn't have any sewers? Maybe they just put the excess water in a bathtub. How much money are they contributing to this possible loss of revenue for MDC. Can they legally take our money or say we have to pay the bill? He doesn't feel we should have to pay the bill.

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The State should have some kind of responsibility in helping Hartford, capitol of our state. Maybe the state should foot the bill, not the surrounding towns. It is not the time to do shared services or regionalization with a town that can't pay its own bills

Matt DeAngelo of 16 Dennison Ridge said thought things would calm down once the election was over but that is not the case. He wanted to extend some remarks he made. He had no problem with 99% of what the Mayor wrote. He thought it was fair game in politics. He does take issue with one phrase, from reading between the lines and he felt that one line was something that he really didn't deserve. You can criticize him over his choice and his stand on the issues, but he really did think on a personal level it went a little too far. Still thinks an apology is in order.

Tom Mazzarella of 600 Wolcott Hill Road thought we got a lot of good information. Personally, Wethersfield should not be involved in Hartford's problems. We have our own problems. Its Hartford's problem: hey can either raise their taxes to get more money or spend less money on all this other nonsense. The MDC doesn't want to put itself in the same position as Hartford. They don't want to come up short. Wethersfield taxpayers are going to end up paying for Hartford's water and that is just not right. They had a public meeting last week and it was reported in the newspaper that they were going to back off on this plan because there was so much backlash. He goes away, comes back and reads in the paper that they changed their minds. Going back to plan A and they are going to have an emergency meeting to vote on it on Tuesday. So they didn't come here tonight to ask us what our opinion was or which way we wanted to vote. They came here to tell us what was going to happen. Tuesday they are going to vote, and it is going to get approved. We will then get a bill for it. That is not right. He hopes our Commissioners on the MDC board would vote against this plan. He was wondering what Wethersfield's position was on this.

Ray Townsend of 106 Broad Street was a little surprised at the MDC's response that they are just now looking at needing a reserve to cover potential shortfalls from customers. He would have expected that there would be some place in their budget to have a place to build in a reserve for just something like this. The concept of a municipality going under is not new. We have had a number of them declare bankruptcy, most notably Detroit, so this shouldn't have come as a surprise as they are stating it was. What are they going to do now going forward to prevent this situation from happening again to where they need to go out to other customers and request further funding? He would urge the Town of Wethersfield to all actions to reject the additional charges including court action if it's appropriate and available to prevent the seizure of State or city property.

Mayor Montinieri stated that it was important that the MDC come and explain the latest numbers. There has been a strong expression of opposition to the fact that the costs would be passed on to the towns. It was a surprise initially to the towns that in the event of a shortfall from Hartford that the Charter of the MDC had a provision like this that would pass back and so the initial education to us was part of it, but the Mayor of Hartford indicated a commitment to pay the first two quarters which reduced the exposure and amount of money involved. We have expressed to the MDC that there has to be quite a bit more participation on the part of the State Legislature as a result. Clearly the solution to this lies in resources that go beyond the local municipalities. The solution needs to be grabbed with in special session. If the bond impact on MDC were to be negative to MDC then that eventually trickles back to us as well. The MDC is not on the opposite side of the table fighting with the towns. They are saying they have a problem that they are facing and if they become exposed because the bonds are being sold at a higher



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rate then that cost is going back somewhere and we are going to find it in our water bills and find it in some other things. The MDC is responding responsibly to solve this, so that they answer the bond issue to keep that cost down, and because, this is not a recaptured cost. Once that bond gets sent out if the rating continues to drop and they don't provide an answer to this, they will not get that interest back and years from now they will be paying that for the extended period of the bond. We are actually partners with the MDC on that part of the problem even though we might have great resistance to the municipalities being tagged with it. We are expressing very assertively that this creates a great issue for us. Our first priority is to our taxpayers and we are going to do everything we can to reach out to our state delegation to say that this problem needs to be at the state level and not trickling into these other member towns.

Councilor Latina asked what our position was on this.

Mayor Montinieri responded that we want to avoid this scenario at all costs. We do not want to see this happen because it will be a huge hit to our budget. His energy, in terms of where we are, is pleading to our delegation that this problem needs to get solved. We can't wait till May for us to get stuck with it under our reserve. He and the Town Manager have talked about some scenarios along with other Town Managers about putting some safety nets in late in the year through our rainy day fund or our fund balance reserve so that we are not raising taxes. He doesn't believe it should be a tax issue that would impact our taxpayers.

Councilor Latina asked who our MDC Commissioners were.

Mayor Montinieri replied that they were Andrew Adil, Daniel Camilliere, Mark Pappa and Martin Courneen. Every Councilor is welcome to weigh in to them.

Councilor Hurley stated that his position is that we don't touch our reserve fund balance and we don't raise the mill rate.

Deputy Mayor Barry stated his position is that the legislative fix at the state level is where our energy would be best served. He does not favor the Town of Wethersfield footing this bill. It is a state wide issue and it is much larger than the local towns surrounding Hartford.

Councilor Latina thought that the legislative fix is going to come to the later part of the spring into the summer so by then our budget is already passed.

Deputy Mayor Barry stated that we may have to make choices which we have had to do in the past. It's a tough decision and we are probably going to be faced with more tough decisions.

### COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Hemmann reported that the Housing Authority is moving along with their renovations to the elderly properties and are being received well by the residents and they are at the tail end of the Westfield Heights renovations with just some punch list item and their vacancy rate is low which is always a positive thing.

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Councilor Martino reported that he attended the Senior Citizens Advisory Commission meeting and residents should be aware of the Whole Front applications if anybody needs help with repairs to their houses must be received by December 16, 2016 to be considered for help in 2017 year. In the past that group has been able to repair roofs, windows and do other major repairs. Anyone in need of this should contact Chris Taylor in Social Services and she will help you fill out an application. The Shared Services Committee met and they had an update on the IT consolidation which is going well. They asked the Manager and Superintendent to have a meeting with the Maintenance Department heads and the Union leaders to attain information so they look at the perspective for consolidation down the road. They want the unions included so that they are not coming in at the end saying they knew nothing about this so they will be provided the information right up front.

Councilor Rell reported the Historical Society has a class that the high school students are participating in which is full and very popular. It is the Wethersfield Studies class. They go around the sites of Old Wethersfield and learn about the history of it. After tonight's meeting, he is going to put in a recommendation that the high students should spend an hour here and listen to modern day government at work. The Historical Society is putting on an art show of Phil Lowman's work at the Keeney Center for the next couple of months. He is a local resident and his work has been in the Hartford Courant and various national magazines and a number of publications. He invited people to come down to the Keeney Center and take a look at his work. He is a great asset to the Town of Wethersfield.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Martino stated that he attended the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration for the Connecticut Health District which was held at the Timberland Golf Course. The guest speaker was Senator Terry Gerratana and she presented a proclamation to the State and she brought everyone up to speed on what the various health districts do and how they do it and the pending legislation and it was very informative. He wanted to congratulate the Health District on their 20 years of combined service with the other towns.

Councilor Hurley stated that on December 1<sup>st</sup> will be Holidays on Main from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. They block off the streets in Old Wethersfield. They have a bunch of food vendors, craft fair in the Webb Barn, tree lighting and the Mayor makes a few comments when Santa Claus comes in and it is a good event.

Mayor Montinieri was advised last night that Shirley Steinmetz, our Democrat Town Committee Chair for many, many years passed away. She was a first class wonderful human being who gave tirelessly to our community in a lot of capacities and he asked for a moment of silence on her behalf.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Bridges stated that the town is going out in December for the last 8.8 million bond for the Wethersfield High School. We have to get a rating and then we will then market the bond before the end of December. There will be a meeting with the abutters of the Cloverdale pond on Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers with the Engineering Department. Invitation letters went out last week so they want to meet with the abutters to go over the plans, make sure we get comments and cover the bases so we can do finalized plans and then get them bid out so that we are in the position to construct that this summer.

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TOWN CLERK COMMUNICATION

Town Clerk Sassano stated that Red Lobster sold again last Friday for 7 million and the Santander property on Silas Deane Highway was also sold. We are doing well with commercial properties as well as with higher priced homes. So it's been looking better.

COUNCIL ACTIONORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR ACTION

Councilor Martino motioned to **“ACCEPT THE APPOINT OF JOHN AFORISMO TO FILL A VACANCY TO THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT HEALTH DISTRICT FOR A TERM OF 11-21-16 TO 6-30-17”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONEOTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Barry motioned to **“APPROVE THE INVOICE FOR \$30,000 FOR QUISENBERRY ARCARI ARCHITECTS FOR WORK RELATED TO THE WETHERSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Town Manager Bridges stated that this is for the work to do the drawings for the natatorium, the swimming pool that was on and above the original contract for the design of the High School so that is an additional cost and was approved by the Building Committee.

Councilor Martino indicated that he noticed that there was still \$2,500 remaining for the track design and he was wondering wasn't that done or finished and shouldn't that be closed out or is that a surplus.

Town Manager Bridges said they would check on that with the Building Committee.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Spinella motioned to **“APPROVE THE AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Town Manager Bridges stated this is the funds that they comingled with CRCOG for Regional Emergency Management services. This is a grant we do each year. He handles this with the Emergency Management Director, Jim Ritter.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.  
Councilor Martino motioned to **“APPROVE THE GRANT REQUEST FOR AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

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Town Manager Bridges stated that these are local dollars that go to pay our specific expenses for the Emergency Management Director like payroll and some supplies for the Emergency Operations Center. We have gotten these for the past seven to eight years.

Councilor Rell questioned that this is a \$13,000 grant and if we get it every year, do we spend all of it every year.

Town Manager Bridges responded that we budget the expense and the revenue and it tends to be a wash.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

BIDS

Councilor Martino motioned to **“SIGN THE ELECTRICITY AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE WITH CRCOG AND PURCHASE ELECTRICITY FOR \$.0794/KWH”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

Sally Katz, Director of Physical Services stated that CRCOG goes out to solicit bids for the cost of electricity. This year approximately ten different communities participated in it. The bids came back slightly more than what we had been paying. It was a competitive process and the numbers you have in front of you does represent the lowest bid that was received by CRCOG and it is good for two years.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Spinella motioned to **“AWARD BID FOR THE PURCHASE OF POLICE VEHICLES 4 UTILITY POLICE INTERCEPTORS TALLING \$113,918 AND TO DISPOSE OF THE FOUR FORD CROWN VICTORIA’S AS IDENTIFIED”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Town Manager Bridges stated that we are moving to all SUV vehicles due to their size. The newer cruiser designs given the equipment that we put in them and the equipment that the officers wear, they are not suitable.

Director Katz stated that it also continues our program to remove the antiquated cars from our fleet. This came in at about at budget.

Councilor Hurley asked how much the operating budget goes up if we have all SUVs versus the other cars.

Director Katz replied that surprisingly the miles per gallon is not that different between the cruiser and the SUVs because of the way they are driven. We don’t have statistics right now. By utilizing all one type of car we then can buy parts in volume; it’s the same light packages, the same other equipment that goes in there instead of having to carry inventory or purchase inventory for two different models.

Councilor Rell questioned whether there was truly a need to get these four crown Victoria’s off the road or is it simply to get all the fleet to match. Four year old cars doesn’t seem too used.

## Approved

Director Katz responded that the Crown Victoria's are more and more expensive to continue to try to maintain and also the other Crown Victoria's are north of 100,000 miles on them. They are wildly non-fuel efficient. They are also rear wheel drive cars. No, it is not just a vanity thing of having everybody driving the same. It really is one where we need to keep our fleet from aging.

Councilor Rell asked if they would be put up for auction and what type of revenue would we get.

Director Katz replied possibly between \$3,000 and \$5,000.00 a car. They are becoming less and less desirable because of the age, the amount of miles, the amount of work that has gone into them and the fact that more and more people are not using them any longer.

Town Manager Bridges stated that we don't issue each officer a vehicle. They share vehicles so keeping them all relatively newer and keeping them all in a higher state of maintenance allows multiple officers to use those without problems.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION - NONEMINUTES

Deputy Mayor Barry motioned **"TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 2016"**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tom Mazzarella of 600 Wolcott Hill Road thanked Mayor Montinieri for explaining some of the questions he brought up but he still didn't get a good sense of what the vote is going to be tomorrow. Is it Wethersfield's position to approve the budget as presented and work towards these other solutions over a period of time or does the Town Council affect the vote by the four Commission members that Wethersfield has on the board panel for MDC. He got the sense that the vote is going to pass and we will work on these other issues later on.

Mayor Montinieri responded that he thought that the Councilors would reach out to the Commissioners and express their objection on how they vote. They are looking at the same dilemma from the same prism. They will certainly hear the concerns from the town.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Martino motioned **"TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION"** at 8:45 p.m., seconded by Councilor Spinella.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Approved

Councilor Martino motioned **“TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION”** at 9:04 p.m., seconded by Councilor Rell.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 9:04 p.m., Councilor Martino moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Rell. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

APPROVED BY VOTE OF COUNCIL (8-0-1)  
(Councilor Bello Abstained)  
December 5, 2016

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Clarification made on Page 3 reference should be Hartford and not you in Councilor Latina's remarks.